

Message Text

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 01 STATE 025987
ORIGIN NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 IO-14 ISO-00 PM-05 SSO-00
PA-02 PRS-01 INR-07 INRE-00 USIE-00 ACDA-12
NSCE-00 /074 R

DRAFTED BY NEA/AFN:TSWILKINSON:PAW
APPROVED BY NEA/AFN:JKBISHOP
NEA:NAVELIOTES
PM:RERICSON
AF/W:DKILLION (SUBS)

-----110253 010313Z /75

O 010204Z FEB 78 ZFF4
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY RABAT NIACT IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY ALGIERS IMMEDIATE NIACT
INFO AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY MADRID
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

UNCLAS STATE 025987

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: MASS, SOPN, MO

SUBJECT: NEW YORK TIMES ARTICLE ON U.S. ARMS SALES TO
MOROCCO

1. JANUARY 31 NEW YORK TIMES CARRIES FRONT-PAGE ARTICLE BY
BERNARD GWERTZMAN UNDER HEADLINE "U.S. WEIGHS ARMS SALES
UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 STATE 025987

TO MOROCCO" DATELINED WASHINGTON, JANUARY 30.
TEXT OF ARTICLE FOLLOWS:

QUOTE: THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION, IN A MOVE WITH POLICY
IMPLICATIONS FOR THE MIDDLE EAST AND AFRICA, HAS BEGUN
INFORMING CONGRESS OF ITS INTENTION TO SELL MOROCCO AIR-
CRAFT AND HELICOPTERS FOR USE IN THE WESTERN SAHARA AGAINST

ALGERIAN-BACKED GUERRILLAS.

IN INITIAL DISCUSSIONS ON CAPITOL HILL, THE ADMINISTRATION HAS ALSO DISCLOSED THAT, TO PERMIT MOROCCO TO USE THE EQUIPMENT, THE UNITED STATES CONTEMPLATES REWRITING AN 18-YEAR-OLD MILITARY AGREEMENT THAT BARS MOROCCO FROM DEPLOYING AMERICAN ARMS BEYOND ITS BORDERS.

OFFICIALS SAID THE 1960 AGREEMENT, WHOSE TEXT IS STILL SECRET, LIMITED THE USE OF EQUIPMENT TO THE DEFENSE OF MOROCCO. THE REVISION WOULD PERMIT USE IN THE PART OF THE

WESTERN SAHARA THAT WAS PLACED UNDER MOROCCAN MANDATE WHEN THE TERRITORY WAS PARTITIONED IN 1975 BETWEEN MOROCCO AND MAURITANIA. HOWEVER, THE UNITED STATES WILL CONTINUE NOT TO RECOGNIZE MOROCCAN SOVEREIGNTY IN THE AREA.

MOREOVER, MOROCCO WOULD BE ALLOWED TO USE THE EQUIPMENT IN SUPPORT OF THE 5,000 TROOPS IT RECENTLY DISPATCHED TO AID MAURITANIA IN ITS FIGHT AGAINST THE GUERRILLAS, KNOWN AS POLISARIO.

OFFICIALS SAID THAT IF A DECISION WAS MADE, CONGRESS WOULD STILL HAVE 50 DAYS TO BLOCK THE SALE. THE UNITED STATES HAS TWO NAVAL INSTALLATIONS IN MOROCCO -- AN AIR STATION AT KENITRA AND A COMMUNICATIONS STATION AT SIDI YAHYA -- UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03 STATE 025987

BUT THERE ARE NO PLANS FOR AMERICANS TO BE INVOLVED IN THE FIGHTING, OFFICIALS SAID. UNDER SUCH SALES IN THE PAST, PERSONNEL FROM PURCHASING COUNTRIES HAVE BEEN TRAINED IN THE USE OF THE NEW EQUIPMENT IN THE UNITED STATES.

ADMINISTRATION AND CONGRESSIONAL SOURCES, IN POINTING OUT THAT THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE MOROCCAN DEAL EXTENDED BEYOND THE WESTERN SAHARA SITUATION, SAID IT SHOULD BE SEEN AS A RESPONSE TO CONCERN EXPRESSED BY MOROCCO AND OTHER AMERICAN FRIENDS -- SAUDI ARABIA, IRAN AND EGYPT -- THAT THE UNITED STATES WAS NOT TAKING AN ACTIVE ENOUGH ROLE AGAINST SOVIET PENETRATION OF AFRICA.

OFFICIALS SAID THAT SINCE PRESIDENT CARTER HAD COME TO OFFICE DETERMINED TO AVOID INVOLVEMENT IN AFRICA, THE MOVE IN THE WESTERN SAHARA COULD AROUSE A CONTROVERSY WITH CONGRESS. THE OFFICIALS SAID THEY WERE THEREFORE CONSULTING WITH CONGRESS ABOUT THE DEAL.

AS OUTLINED TO MEMBERS OF CONGRESS AND THEIR STAFFS, THE UNITED STATES PLANS TO SELL 24 OV-10 ARMED RECONNAISSANCE AIRCRAFT ORIGINALLY DESIGNED FOR COUNTERINSURGENCY OPERA-

TIONS IN VIETNAM IN THE 1960'S BY ROCKWELL INTERNATIONAL. THE PLANE, A SLOW-FLYING TURBOPROP, IS KNOWN AS THE BRONCO AND IS BELIEVED MORE EFFECTIVE AGAINST GUERRILLAS THAN THE F-5B'S THAT MOROCCO HAS. IN ADDITION, THE UNITED STATES ALSO PLANS TO PROVIDE 24 COBRA HELICOPTER GUNSHIPS MADE BY BELL.

THE TOTAL COST IS BELIEVED TO BE \$100 MILLION, INCLUDING SPARE PARTS AND TRAINING. PART OF IT WOULD BE OFFSET BY MILITARY CREDITS NOW RUNNING AT \$45 MILLION A YEAR. SAUDI ARABIA HAS ALSO HELPED MOROCCO DEFRAY MILITARY EXPENSES IN FIGHTING THE GUERRILLAS.

THE UNITED STATES' PLAN TO MEET MOROCCO'S REQUEST WAS A UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 04 STATE 025987

DIFFICULT ONE, OFFICIALS SAID, BECAUSE THERE WERE STRONG VOICES IN THE STATE DEPARTMENT OPPOSING AMERICAN INVOLVEMENT IN THE WESTERN SAHARA DISPUTE.

AREA WAS ABANDONED BY SPAIN

THE ISSUE HAS ITS ORIGINS IN SPAIN'S DECISION IN LATE 1975 TO WITHDRAW FROM ITS COLONY, THE SPANISH SAHARA, AND TO PARTITION IT BETWEEN MOROCCO AND MAURITANIA. ALGERIA, A TRADITIONAL RIVAL OF MOROCCO, RESPONDED BY HELPING CREATE THE WESTERN SAHARAN INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT KNOWN AS POLISARIO. SINCE EARLY 1976, THE POLISARIO FORCES, BACKED BY ALGERIA AND INDIRECTLY BY THE SOVIET UNION, HAVE BEEN CONTESTING MOROCCAN AND MAURITANIAN CONTROL IN DESERT WARFARE.

THE UNITED STATES ROLE HAS BEEN AMBIGUOUS. IT VOTED WITH A UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION THAT CALLED ON MOROCCO AND MAURITANIA TO GIVE SELF-DETERMINATION TO THE PEOPLE OF THE WESTERN SAHARA. MOROCCO CONTENDS THE CHOICE WAS MADE BY A RUMP GROUP OF SAHARAN LEADERS WHO DECIDED TO ACCEPT PARTITION.

OFFICIALLY, THE UNITED STATES HAS RECOGNIZED NEITHER MOROCCAN NOR MAURITANIAN SOVEREIGNTY OVER THE REGION -- NOR HAS ANY COUNTRY EXCEPT THE IVORY COAST -- BUT THE AMERICANS DO NOT FAVOR ALGERIAN CONTROL EITHER.

LAST FALL, A MOROCCAN DELEGATION CAME TO WASHINGTON WITH A LIST OF ARMS THAT IT WANTED TO PURCHASE FOR THE WAR AGAINST THE POLISARIO. THE MOROCCANS HAVE BEEN WARNING THE UNITED STATES ABOUT THE SOVIET UNION'S ROLE IN NORTH AFRICA AND URGING THE UNITED STATES TO BECOME MORE UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 05 STATE 025987

ACTIVELY INVOLVED, OFFICIALS SAID. SAUDI ARABIA AND IRAN, ALARMED AT SOVIET AND CUBAN INVOLVEMENT IN ANGOLA AND ETHIOPIA, HAVE ALSO BEEN PRESSING THE UNITED STATES TO BECOME MORE ACTIVE.

DEBATE WITHIN THE ADMINISTRATION

ACCORDING TO OFFICIALS, THERE WAS A DEBATE WITHIN THE ADMINISTRATION BETWEEN THOSE WHO URGED SUPPORT FOR THE POLISARIO INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT AND THOSE WHO FELT THAT LONG TIES WITH MOROCCO WARRANTED SUPPORT OF THE MOROCCAN POSITION.

IN RECENT WEEKS, AS A RESULT OF THE PEACE INITIATIVE OF PRESIDENT ANWAR EL-SADAT OF EGYPT, THE ARAB WORLD HAS

BECOME SPLIT, WITH MOROCCO SUPPORTING EGYPT, AND ALGERIA OPPOSING THE DIRECT ISRAELI-EGYPTIAN DISCUSSIONS. MR. SADAT IS STOPPING OFF IN MOROCCO ON HIS WAY TO WASHINGTON LATER THIS WEEK, AND IS LIKELY TO DISCUSS THE SOVIET ROLE IN AFRICA WITH PRESIDENT CARTER OVER THE WEEKEND, OFFICIALS SAID.

EGYPT HAS EXPRESSED INTEREST IN BUYING THE F-5E, A RELATIVELY INEXPENSIVE FIGHTER PLANE, AND OTHER EQUIPMENT THAT UP TO NOW HAS BEEN WITHHELD BY THE UNITED STATES. SAUDI ARABIA HAS A PENDING REQUEST FOR 60 F-15 FIGHTER-BOMBERS, AN ADVANCED PLANE, AND ISRAEL HAS REQUESTS FOR 150 F-16'S, ALSO AN ADVANCED FIGHTER, AND 25 F-15'S.

MR. CARTER, AT HIS NEWS CONFERENCE TODAY, SAID HE EXPECTED RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL ON THOSE REQUESTS THIS WEEK. THE UNITED STATES WOULD LIKE TO MEET THE REQUESTS, BUT IS CONCERNED ABOUT THE IMPACT OF SUCH DEALS ON THE MIDDLE EAST TALKS. END QUOTE. VANCE

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 06 STATE 025987

UNCLASSIFIED

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ARMS, PRESS COMMENTS, MILITARY SALES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 01 feb 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 jan 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978STATE025987
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: TSWILKINSON:PAW
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780047-0316
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t197802106/aaaadljb.tel
Line Count: 217
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: d48d6dcd-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN NEA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 14 feb 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3440980
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: NEW YORK TIMES ARTICLE ON U.S. ARMS SALES TO MOROCCO
TAGS: MASS, SOPN, MO
To: RABAT ALGIERS
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/d48d6dcd-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014